

E L E G I E S

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L O N D O N :

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E L E G I E S.

E L E G Y I.

AH stay!—thy wand oblivious o'er my eyes
Yet wave, mild power of sleep!—my pray'r is vain;
She flies, the partial nurse of nature flies,
With all her soothing visionary train.

Then let me forth ; and near yon flowering thorn
Taste heav'n's pure breath ; while rob'd in amber vest,
Fresh from her watry couch, the youthful morn
Steals on the slumbers of the drowzy east.

Lo, at her presence, the strong arm of toil,
With glittering sickle, mows the prime of may ;
While yon poor hirelings, for the mine's rude soil,
Leave to their sleeping babes their cots of clay.

With sturdy step, they cheerly whistle o'er
The path that flings across the reedy plain,
To the deep caverns of that yawning moor,
Whose shaggy breast abhors the golden grain.

There, in her green drefs, nature never roves,
Spreads the gay lawn, nor lifts the lordly pine,
They fee no melting clouds refresh the groves,
No living landscape drawn by hands divine.

But many a fathom from the funny breeze,
Their painful way in central night they wear ;
Heave the pik'd axes on their bended knees,
Or fidelong the rough quarry slowly tear.

Yet while damp vapours chill each reeking brow,
How loudly laughs the jovial voice of mirth ;
Pleas'd that the wages of the day allow
A focial blaze to cheer their ev'ning hearth.

There the chafte houfwife, with maternal care,
Her thrifty diftaf plies, in grave attire ;
Bleft to behold her ruddy offspring wear
The full refemblance of their fturdy fire,

To fpread with fuch coarfe fare their homely board
As fits the genius of their little fate,
Free from thofe ills that haunt their pamper'd lord ;
To be unhappy we muft firft be great.

In

In these dark caves, where heav'n's paternal hand,
Far from the world, their private cradle laid,
They toil secure : the storms that strike the land
With wild dismay, roll harmless o'er their head.

For who, the load of weary life to bear,
Wou'd from these murky mansions chace the slave ?
Who cease to breathe heav'n's pure and chearful air,
To be but living tenants of the grave ?

Yet harra's'd as they are, their face still wears
The reverend comeliness of green old age ;
No stains their mind from worldly science bears ;
Their ray of knowledge gleams from nature's page.

The few plain rules her simple lessons give,
They still thro' life with pleas'd attention ply ;
Their helpless offspring bid them wish to live,
Their breathless parents bid them learn to die.

And surely heav'n, whose penetrating sight
Pierces the soul, and reads its inmost groan,
Must see content, with more sincere delight,
Toil in the mine, than triumph on the throne ;

See

See * Charles, more pleas'd, within the convent's gloom,
Seeking the slaves calm nights, their temperate days,
And peaceful passage to the private tomb,
Than diadem'd with glory's crimson rays.

Ev'n the proud sage, whose deep mysterious brain
Has reason'd all the balm of hope away,
Convinc'd that learning's but ingenious pain,
Might hail their happier lot, and fighting say,

" Oh had I thus, within the dark profound,
" By daily labor earn'd my daily food ;
" Or with yon feedfman sow'd the quickening ground,
" Or cleav'd with ponderous ax the groaning wood !
" Full many an hour that now, tho' sped with art,
" On flow and dusky pinions fullen flies,
" Full many an anxious wish, or pang of heart,
" That reason's boasted anodyne defies,

" Had

* Charles V. of Spain, who in the full blaze of his glory, resigned the throne to his son Philip, and retired to a convent in Estremadura.

- “ Had ne’er been born. Nor had th’ uneasy mind,
“ Pent in the prison of this mortal mould,
“ Felt its ethereal energy confin’d,
“ Its brightest sunshine in dark clouds enroll’d.
- “ But native sense her modest course had run;
“ Her faintly lustre untaught virtue spread;
“ Health crown’d my toils, and ere the day was done,
“ Sound sleep beneath some alder’s rustling shade.
- “ Then, as I stole down life’s declining hill,
“ Here nature’s gifts had furnish’d nature’s needs,
“ The brook’s cold beverage ev’ry latent ill
“ Had starv’d, that cloyster’d contemplation feeds.
- “ Till, in the peaceful shade of this lone bower,
“ Or near yon shattered tower in silence laid,
“ The orient orb, that watch’d my natal hour,
“ Had brightly glitter’d o’er my mouldering head.

T O
S I C K N E S S.
E L E G Y II.

HOW blith the flowery graces of the spring
From nature's wardrobe come : and hark how gay
Each glittering insect, hovering on the wing,
Sings their glad welcome to the fields of may.

They gaze, with greedy eye, each beauty o'er ;
They suck the sweet breath of the blushing rose ;
Sport in the gale, or sip the rainbow shower ;
Their life's short day no pause of pleasure knows.

Like their's, dread Power, my chearful morn display'd
The flattering promise of a golden noon,
Till each gay cloud, that sportive nature spread,
Died in the gloom of thy distemper'd frown.

Yes, ere I told my two and twentieth year,
Swift from thy quiver flew the deadly dart ;
Harmless it past 'mid many a blith compeer,
And found its fated entrance near my heart.

Pale

Pale as I lay beneath thy ebony wand,
I saw them rove through pleasure's flowery field ;
I saw health paint them with her rosy hand,
Eager to burst my bonds, but forc'd to yield.

Yet while this mortal cot of mould'ring clay
Shakes at the stroke of thy tremendous power,
Ah must the transient tenant of a day
Bear the rough blast of each tempestuous hour !

Say, shall the terrors thy pale flag unfolds,
Too rigid Queen ! unnerve the soul's bright powers,
Till with a joyless smile the eye beholds
Art's magic charms, and nature's fairy bowers.

No, let me follow still, those bowers among,
Her flowery footsteps, as the goddess goes ;
Let me, just lifted 'bove th' unletter'd throng,
Read the few books the learned few compose.

And suffer, when thy awful pleasure calls
The soul to share her frail companion's smart,
Yet suffer me to taste the balm that falls,
From friendship's tongue, so sweet upon the heart.

B

Then,

Then, tho' each trembling nerve confess thy frown,

Ev'n till this anxious being shall become

But a brief name upon a little stone,

Without one murmur I embrace my doom.

For many a virtue, shelter'd from mankind,

Lives calm with thee, and lord o'er each desire ;

And many a feeble frame, whose mighty mind

Each muse has touch'd with her immortal fire.

Ev'n * He, sole terror of a venal age,

The tuneful bard, whose philosophic soul,

With such bright radiance glow'd on Virtue's page,

Learn'd many a lesson from thy moral school.

He † too, who "*mounts and keeps his distant way,*"

His daring mind thy humanizing glooms

Have temper'd with a melancholy ray,

And taught to warble 'mid the village tombs.

Yes, goddess, to thy temple's deep recess

I come ; and lay for ever at its door

The firen throng of follies numberless,

Nor with their flattering songs shou'd sooth me more.

Thy

* Mr. POPE.

† Mr. GRAY.

E L E G Y II.

11

Thy decent garb shall o'er my limbs be spread,
Thy hand shall lead me to thy sober train,
Who here retir'd, with pensive pleasure tread
The silent windings of thy dark domain.

Hither the cherub charity shall fly
From her bright orb, and brooding o'er my mind,
For misery raise a sympathizing sigh,
Pardon for foes, and love for humankind.

Then while ambition's trump, from age to age
Its slaughter'd millions boasts; while fame shall rear
Her deathless trophies o'er the bard and sage,
Be mine the widow's sigh, the orphan's prayer.

The E N D.

Figure 1

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